



New Mexico Environment Department

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Recommendations for households regarding solid waste and recycling during the COVID-19 public health emergency

April 1, 2020

In light of the public health emergency declared by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham and the executive and public health orders in effect, the New Mexico Environment Department issues the following recommendations to households:

Trash (Solid Waste)

- Residents *can* and *should* continue to dispose of their trash normally. Never burn, bury, or dump your household waste.
- Waste from a household where a person tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19 infection *can* and *should* be disposed of as regular household waste. Residents are encouraged to:
 - Take precautions but do not fear your trash! Place it in your waste receptacle, bag it or double bag it, and wash your hands.
 - No loose trash in your curbside can! Loose trash plus wind creates litter. Bag it to avoid litter and to protect our sanitation workers and their families.
 - Disinfect your trash cans - inside and out! Put on gloves, wash or wipe the trashcans with a disinfectant and then wash your hands again.
 - Use trash bags to secure all household waste. Securely tie the bags closed. Double bagging is not required but may be helpful.
 - Toilets aren't trashcans! Trash generated from caring for someone in your household from someone with a cold, flu or COVID-19 should not be flushed. This could clog your drains and cost you hundreds of dollars to fix – and possibly leave you without a toilet in the meantime!
 - Place bags in your curbside trash bin or take them to a solid waste facility (registered collection center or permitted transfer station or landfill), as you normally do. Solid waste facilities are essential services but be sure to check with your local facility for current operating hours.
 - Disinfect your hands! Wash them for 20 seconds with soap after handling trash.
- Waste generated by a professional home health care provider must be managed as infectious waste. Contact the Solid Waste Bureau at (505) 827-0197 or SWB.inbox@state.nm.us for more information.

Recycling

- Continue to recycle items you would normally recycle, such as cardboard boxes and aluminum cans. These materials do not need to be placed in the trash bin.

Contact us:

Solid Waste Bureau (SWB), (505) 827-0197
SWB.inbox@state.nm.us

Contact your community's recycling program (city or county solid waste department, solid waste authority, or tribal government) for more information on the types of materials that can be recycled. See a directory here: www.recyclenewmexico.com/.

- Hold on to items for donation until thrift stores and donation drop-offs are open again. Never place these items in the recycling bin.
- Reusable bags can still be used while grocery shopping. Some stores may ask that you bag your own groceries to limit the need for their employees to handle customers' bags.

Visiting a Solid Waste or Recycling Facility

- Be aware that transfer stations, collection centers, and recycling facilities may have reduced operating hours or limited services at this time. Contact your local facility before visiting. Contact information is here: www.env.nm.gov/solid-waste/lists-of-facilities-and-haulers/.
- Limit the amount of "spring cleaning" waste you generate during this public health emergency so that you don't have to make unnecessary trips to your local solid waste facility. This will also help facilities from becoming overwhelmed with additional waste during this emergency.
- Maintain physical distancing requirements of six feet between yourself and others when visiting solid waste and recycling facilities.